REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration based on the following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-24 are pending. Claims 1-24 have been rejected. Claims 1, 11, 15, and 22 are independent claims from which claims 2-10, 12-14, 16-21 and 23-24 respectively depend.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview held on April 14, 2004. Attached herewith is an Interview Summary.

Claims 1-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Blood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,456,706). It is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable for the reasons set forth below.

According to exemplary embodiments, methods and systems are provided for blocking calls. According to one embodiment, information regarding calls to be blocked for a subscriber is maintained in a database within a network. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 1, subscriber data may be stored in a database 124 coupled to a service control point (SCP) 118 in a network 10. As illustrated and described with reference to FIG. 2, call blocking may be activated/deactivated by the SCP 118 checking an authorization code entered by a subscriber against a code stored in the database 124. As illustrated and described with reference to FIG. 3, once call blocking is activated, when an outgoing call is placed, a trigger causes processing of the call to be halted at a central office or service switching point (SSP) 114, and a message including the called number and calling number are sent to the SCP 118. The SCP 118 checks the called number against information stored in the database 124 to determine whether the called number is an allowed number or a prohibited number. If the call is allowed, it is completed. Otherwise, the call is not completed.

Claim 1, for example recites:

> A method for blocking a call to a called line selected by a calling party, said calling party having a calling line identification number, said method comprising:
> receiving a communication directed to a called line from a calling line;
> *obtaining a calling line identification number for said communication;*
> obtaining a called line identification number for said communication;
> *looking for said calling line identification number in a data store to determine data associated with said calling line identification number concerning calls from the calling line to a called line which are to be blocked;* and

terminating the call if the data indicates that the call is to be blocked.

(emphasis added).

Blood is directed to a telephone screening device that prevents out-going calls to a specified area code. (Blood, Abstract.) "Calls can also be activated by time of day to permit blocking of incoming and outgoing calls by time of day, phone number and area code." (See Blood column 8, lines 12-14). Blood does not explicitly disclose or suggest, "obtaining a calling line identification number", or "looking for said calling line identification number in a data store to determine data associated with said calling line identification number concerning calls from the calling line to a called line which are to be blocked" as recited by Applicant's claim 1. Rather, in Blood, only the area code/phone number of the outgoing call or the time of day are checked to determine whether an outgoing call should be blocked. Because the subject of the Blood patent is a device that attaches to a telephone, there is no need to determine a calling line identification number or to look for that number in a database.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable as are claims 2-10 which depend therefrom and respectfully request the withdrawal of the 102 rejection of these claims.

Applicant's claim 11 recites:

> A method of activating an outgoing call blocking service, comprising:
> *receiving from a calling line at a central office associated with the calling line a predetermined access code corresponding to an outgoing call blocking service;*
> prompting a caller to provide data concerning calls to be blocked;
> receiving the provided data; and
> storing said data in a data store associated with the call blocking service.

(emphasis added.)

Blood does not disclose or suggest at least the italicized features of Applicant's claim 11. The Blood device is a user programmable call screening device attached to a telephone. Data regarding calls to be blocked is entered and stored at the device. Thus, there is no need in Blood for "receiving from a calling line at a central office associated with the calling line a predetermined access code corresponding to an outgoing call blocking service".

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 11 is patentable as are claims 12-21 which depend therefrom and respectfully request the withdrawal of the 102 rejection of these claims.

Similarly, Applicant's claim 15 recites:

> A method of de-activating an outgoing call blocking service, comprising:
> *receiving from a calling line at a central office associated with the calling line a predetermined access code corresponding to an outgoing call blocking service;*
> prompting a caller for an authorization code;
> retrieving a stored authorization code associated with said calling line identification number; and
> comparing the received authorization code with the stored authorization code.

(emphasis added.)

Blood does not disclose or suggest at least the italicized features of Applicant's claim 15. As noted above, the Blood device is a user programmable call screening device attached to a telephone. Data regarding calls to be blocked is entered and stored at the device. Thus, there is no need in Blood for a "receiving from a calling line at a central office associated with the calling line a predetermined access code corresponding to an outgoing call blocking service".

Applicant's claim 22 recites:

> A system for blocking a call between a calling line and a called line within a telecommunications network, comprising:
> *a service switching point office for receiving an out-going call request from the calling line to a called line;*
> a storage device for storing data concerning calls to be blocked; and
> a controller for determining if data concerning a call to the called line corresponds to data concerning calls to be blocked.

(emphasis added.)

Blood does not disclose or suggest at least the italicized features of Applicant's claim 22. The Blood device is attached to a telephone (that is, it is not integrated into the public telephone system) therefore, "a service switching point office for receiving an out-going call request from the calling line to a called line;" is not needed, as the call blocking service is performed entirely on the device.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 22 is patentable as are claims 23-24 which depend therefrom and respectfully request the withdrawal of the 102 rejection of these claims.

In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

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